



Following three years of analysis, planning, and discussion with school, district, college, and nonprofit leaders, the **Cullen Foundation** is proud to announce the launch of the new **Buffalo Urban Teaching Fellows (BUTF)** program to address increasingly acute local teacher shortages.

BUTF is designed to help community members interested in teaching find the right path for them, become successful teachers, and to address **three systemic issues** identified during that process:

1



Diversity

A need for a more diverse teacher workforce to **better represent the student population** (public schools in Buffalo enroll over 80% students of color, but employ only about 15% teachers of color)

2



Teacher Shortage

A need to find more teachers in shortage areas, including special education, bilingual/multilingual education, secondary math and science, and others

3



Location

A need to hire teachers committed to teaching in the city of Buffalo

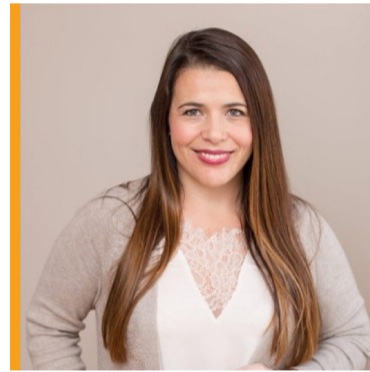


TNTP, a national leader in teacher recruitment and development, will lead **BUTF** the first two years and then work to slowly turn the reins over to local partners by 2027. **BUTF** aims to recruit **225** new teachers to city of Buffalo schools, with a goal of recruiting cohorts that are at least **60%** fellows of color. All fellows will first serve as residents in public schools that enroll students from Buffalo while earning master's degrees and obtaining their teaching certification. **BUTF** provides outreach recruitment, mentoring, wraparound services, and other supports to fellows.

Niagara University, Canisius College, Buffalo State University, and Relay Graduate School of Education will host and certify fellows during their residencies. Fellows will also be eligible for scholarship awards to offset tuition for these programs and will receive wraparound supports to help them succeed in the classroom.

If you know someone who might be a fit for the program, they can apply on the website here: <https://www.teachbuffalo.org/butf>

Melissa A. Lopez



A warm welcome to **BUTF** Founding Director Melissa A. Lopez. Melissa is an award-winning educator with deep expertise in teacher development, experience as a school leader, and more than a decade of classroom teaching experience. Melissa is committed to advancing and ensuring student and teacher success, and has dedicated her career to creating equitable learning environments, coaching and developing fellow educators, supporting teachers to build rigorous and affirming classrooms, and leading thriving teams that improve outcomes and experiences for students.



She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, a Master of Education in Social Studies Education, and an Advanced Certificate in Social Studies 7-12 from the University at Buffalo, and is completing an Advanced School Building Leader Certificate from Canisius College. Melissa lives in the Buffalo area with her husband, daughter, and beagle. You can contact Melissa directly here: melissa.lopez@tnp.org

Thoughts from Leaders in Our Community



"United Way is excited to support the Buffalo Urban Teacher Fellowship to drive educational success by addressing teacher shortages and increasing representation of our student populations in schools throughout Buffalo."

-Trina Burruss, CEO, United Way of Buffalo & Erie County

"TNTP is thrilled to support the launch and growth of the Buffalo Urban Teaching Fellows (BUTF) to help bring more talented educators of diverse backgrounds to lead strong classrooms across Buffalo. BUTF is fueled by a host of collaborations across the Buffalo community and we believe that this coalition of supporters is poised for impact together to break down barriers to the teaching profession, create purposeful pathways to equity across the city, and most importantly, to impact the classroom outcomes and experiences of Buffalo students."

-Kit Tollerson, Partner, TNTP

"We are grateful to our many WNY partners for their shared commitment to strengthening the experiences and outcomes for students in Buffalo. TNTP is excited to bring our 25 years of experience engaging and training early career teachers to BUTF, and to support this powerful collective of community members in reshaping and strengthening support for new educators across Buffalo."

-Courtney Smith, Partner, TNTP

"We hear over and over again from school leaders that recruiting and retaining teachers is their biggest challenge right now. We're pleased to partner with local city schools and graduate programs in education to address this issue. TNTP brings experience running fellows programs in 34 cities, and we're eager to see them work hand-in-hand with local organizations to help the region."

-Corey Bunje Bower, Program Officer for Education, Cullen Foundation

Participating Colleges & Universities

Fellows will attend one of these four schools to earn a Master's Degree and a Teacher Certification



Access the Teach Buffalo Website Here

225

Number of teachers BUTF aims to recruit to teach in Buffalo's PreK-12 schools

60%

Percent of teachers of color BUTF aims to enroll

